

Deborah & Jael: Women of Valor

Judges 4&5

Introduction:

Happy Mother's Day!! To all you mom's out there... I hope this is your best mother's day of your life so far. Though my mother has been gone for several years... I'm grateful for the lessons, though sometimes painful, that she taught... and the Godly values she demonstrated in her life.

The fourth chapter of Judges begins with these words: *"And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord after Ehud died."*

As you read through the book of Judges... skipping over those odd names that we can't pronounce... there is a pattern that emerges... the Israelites did evil in the eyes of God AGAIN and God again subjects them to some kind of oppression to bring discipline to them.

Before we become overly critical of the Israelites... we must note this thought that is easy to overlook when studying this book.

1. The periods of peace that are recorded in the book of Judges are recorded in a short statement. (ie: Jdg. 3:30... *"And the land had rest/peace for 80 years"*)

➔ *The book of Judges is concerned with the rescue effort of God for His people, not with the peacetime.*

In this ever-repeating cycle of unfaithfulness and redemption, two women surface whose faith and actions once again provide counsel and freedom from oppression for the Israelites.

Deborah's resume: She is called a prophetess. She was married to a man by the name of Lappidoth. She lived in the hill country. She was decisive and resourceful. She brought peace for 40 years to the land, and she is the only recorded female Judge... that sets her apart and makes her spot in history unique.

Let's unpack a few verses during a time 3125 years ago... to reveal God's lessons for our lives.

I. No Trust, No Triumph! (Judges 4:1-3, 8)

And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD after Ehud died. ² And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-hagoyim. ³ Then the people of Israel cried out to the LORD for help, for he had 900 chariots of iron and he oppressed the people of Israel cruelly for twenty years.

There are two examples of failed trust:

1. They didn't have to be there.

- After they had been enslaved for 20 years, they finally realized where their help had come from.

2. Barak's, the chosen military leader, lack of faith and trust in God. (vs. 8)

⁸ Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, I will go, but if you will not go with me, I will not go."

- ❖ I think Barak had more trust in the presence of Deborah than in the power of God.

Application:

- When we do not trust God, there will be not triumph or victory.
 - ➔ God's principles and standards are for our good.

"Trust in **Lord** with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding."

No Trust, No Triumph

II. Where There Is No Vision There Is No Victory (Judges 4:14-22)

¹⁴ And Deborah said to Barak, "Up! For this is the day in which the Lord has given Sisera into your hand. Does not the Lord go out before you?" So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with 10,000 men following him. ¹⁵ And the Lord routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army before Barak by the edge of the sword. And Sisera got down from his chariot and fled away on foot. ¹⁶ And Barak pursued the chariots and the army to Harosheth-hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was left.

¹⁷ But Sisera fled away on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. ¹⁸ And Jael came out to meet Sisera and said to him, "Turn aside, my lord; turn aside to me; do not be afraid." So he turned aside to her into the tent, and she covered him with a rug. ¹⁹ And he said to her, "Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty." So she opened a skin of milk and gave him a drink and covered him. ²⁰ And he said to her, "Stand at the opening of the tent, and if any man comes and asks you, 'Is anyone here?' say, 'No.'" ²¹ But Jael the wife of Heber took a tent peg, and took a hammer in her hand. Then she went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple until it went down into the ground while he was lying fast asleep from weariness. So he died. ²² And behold, as Barak was pursuing Sisera, Jael went out to meet him and said to him, "Come, and I will show you the man whom you are seeking." So he went in to her tent, and there lay Sisera dead, with the tent peg in his temple.

➤ **I believe Deborah was a person vision.**

- She differed from all of the other judges that we find in this book in at least four respects...

1. **She is the only female judge.**
2. **It appears that she was serving as a judge long before God used her to help bring deliverance.**
3. **She is described as a prophetess.**
4. **Deborah had a regular spot from which she judged Israel.**

NOTE: vs. 6-7... *"Has not the LORD, the God of Israel commanded you, 'Go gather your men at Mount Tabor, taking 10,000 from the people of Naphtali and the people of Zebulun. 7And I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin's army, to meet you by the river Kishon with his chariots and his troops, and I will give him into your hand'?"*

Deborah recognizes the promises and faithfulness of God.

- ⇒ **People of vision** look for opportunities to fulfill God's plan... even when it may not seem to be the right time or the best time.
- ⇒ **Deborah knew**... just like Barak that the people of Israel were not prepared to go into battle against Sisera and his 900 chariots of iron.
 - **Deborah's vision**... God said it... that settles it.

Enter Jael...

- ➡ She was a Kenite.
- ➡ The Canaanites and the Kenites were not at war with one another. The only war was between the Canaanites and the Israelites.
- ➡ So when Sisera found this tent that belonged to a Kenite family (probably based on fabric or a banner) he was sure that he'd found a place of refuge.
- ➡ He asked for a drink... as a good hostess she gave him better than he asked for as well as something to eat... give him a blanket and a place to rest. And promised to not reveal his presence.

NOTE: Isn't it interesting that long before this event ever took place... God moved a Kenite family to the exact place that they needed to be.

- ➡ In one swift, gruesome act, that sounds like **Kathy Bates in the movie "Misery"**... nails Sisera to the ground... literally... and rids the Israelites of a powerful enemy and frees them from a 20 year oppression.
- ➡ Jael's exact motives for killing Sisera are unclear... but it was foretold by Deborah.
- ➡ In Deborah's song of praise in chapter 5... Jael is celebrated for her actions... not Barak.

Where there is no vision there is no victory.

III. No Pledge, No Praise (Judges 4:8-9)

⁸ Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, I will go, but if you will not go with me, I will not go." ⁹ And she said, "I will surely go with you. Nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman."

❖ What a smack in the face.

- ➡ Barak... because of your lack of faith and trust in the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Joshua... the honor will not be yours... it will go to a woman.
- ➡ Barak, the General of the Israelite army... No pledge, No praise.

Application: When we lose focus... God does not receive the praise that he deserves.

God has established His church... and we must remember that in all our victories and accomplishments... God is to be praised.

Conclusion:

One last notation... As I mentioned before... the book of Judges is about God's restoration of the nation of Israel when they strayed against Him.

That is still God's promise today.

Whatever happened to Barak? Restoration!

Hebrews 11:32

*"And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, **Barak**, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets- ³³who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, ³⁴quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight."*